

BRANCH-MINT IN SAN FRANCISCO.

[To accompany H. Res. 58.]

L E T T E R

FROM

THE SECRETARY OF THE TREASURY,

TO THE

CHAIRMAN OF THE COMMITTEE ON APPROPRIATIONS,

*In regard to the unexpended balance of appropriation for construction of
the branch-mint building, San Francisco.*

FEBRUARY 20, 1874.—Recommitted to the Committee on Appropriations and ordered
to be printed.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
Washington, D. C., January 5, 1874.

SIR: I inclose herewith copy of a letter from the Supervising Architect in regard to an unexpended balance, amounting to two hundred and thirty-four thousand one hundred and seventy-six dollars and sixty-four cents, (\$234,176.64,) standing to the credit of the appropriation for the erection of the United States branch-mint in San Francisco, which has become unavailable under the provisions of sections five (5) and six (6) of the act of July 12, 1870, and would respectfully request the passage of a resolution making the appropriation available.

It is of the utmost importance that the new mint should be completed and put in operation at the earliest possible moment, and unless the above appropriation is made available or a similar amount appropriated it will be necessary to suspend work.

It will be seen from the letter of the Supervising Architect that the appropriations for the completion of this building, including the above-named amount, have not exceeded the amount fixed by law, namely, one million five hundred thousand dollars, (\$1,500,000.) There appears to me, therefore, no reason why the above amount should not be rendered available.

In this connection I desire to express my concurrence in the views expressed by the Supervising Architect in regard to the operations of the fifth (5) and sixth (6) sections of the act above referred to, so far as regards the appropriations for public works, and desire to call attention

to the fact that the appropriations for light-houses have been exempted from the operations of this act by the act of June 10, 1872, and would recommend that the same provision be extended to public buildings.]

Very respectfully,

WM. A. RICHARDSON,
Secretary.

Hon. JAMES A. GARFIELD,
Chairman Committee on Appropriations, House of Representatives.

TREASURY DEPARTMENT,
OFFICE OF SUPERVISING ARCHITECT,
December 31, 1873.

SIR: I have the honor to call your attention to the condition of the appropriation for the construction of the United States branch-mint at San Francisco, Cal.

By act of Congress approved July 15, 1870, (Stat. at L., vol. 16, p. 296,) it was provided "that the total cost of the building, exclusive of the sum paid for the site thereof, shall not exceed \$1,500,000," and an appropriation was made, for continuing the work, of \$500,000, and at the close of the fiscal year 1871 there remained on the books of the Treasury an unexpended balance of that appropriation amounting to \$234,176.64, which, under the provisions of the fifth and sixth sections of the act of July 12, 1870, became unavailable, and still remains so, being liable to be covered into the Treasury to the credit of the surplus fund.

By act of March 3, 1861, (Stat. at L., vol. 16, p. 509,) a further appropriation of \$500,000 was made for the completion of the building, which, together with the former appropriations for the work, made the total amount to which the cost of the building was limited. No further appropriation has been made for the construction of the building.

On the 30th of January last you addressed a letter to the chairman of the Appropriations Committee of the House of Representatives, asking that certain balances of appropriations for the construction of public buildings under the charge of this office, which would probably remain unexpended at the close of the last fiscal year, might be made available, which was not done. The balances included the amount hereinbefore specified.

This balance is at present required for the prosecution of the work, and unless it is made available at an early day will result in a great delay in the completion of the building and a consequent increase of cost on the same.

I have therefore to request that immediate action be taken to make the balance (\$234,176.64) available at the earliest moment practicable.

In this connection I deem it proper to again call your attention to the deleterious effects of the fifth and sixth sections of the act of July 12, 1870, on the cost of public buildings. The appropriations as a rule do not become available until the middle of the building season, and by the time the plans are prepared, and contracts entered into after due advertisement, the best part of the building season is passed, and at the close of the fiscal year a balance remains, which, like that in the present instance, cannot be applied to the specific object for which it is appropriated, unless in the fulfillment of contracts made within that fiscal year, should there be any, and in these instances it becomes necessary to render two or more sets of accounts for the same work, increas-

ing the labor in that particular, both at the building and at the Department, and tending to complicate the same. No benefit whatever arises from the action of these provisions upon the appropriations for works of a special nature like those under the charge of this office, which might in any way compensate for the additional labor and expense entailed by them. The cost of the works is increased rather than diminished, and I can see no reason for the application of these provisions to specific appropriations, unless it is to complicate the proper rendition of the accounts and to increase their cost.

I have, therefore, to request that provision be made during the present session of Congress to exempt the appropriations for the construction of public buildings from the provisions of the fifth and sixth sections of the act of Congress approved July 12, 1870.

Very respectfully,

A. B. MULLETT,
Supervising Architect.

Hon. W. A. RICHARDSON,
Secretary of the Treasury.

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